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CASUISTICAL DIVINITY.

When a perſon is mourning and lamenting under a ſenſe of divine withdrawings, cold, formal and remiſs in all duties, walking in darkneſs, and having no light, what means are proper to be adopted, in order to a reſtoration and repoſſeſſion of communion with God? R. W.

ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING QUERY.

THE caſe here ſtated, and the queſtion annexed to it, appear to come from one who is not unacquainted with the work of God's Spirit in the heart; and are very intereſting to many of the Lord's people. I ſhall therefore endeavour to be as explicit in my remarks as poſſible; but before I directly anſwer the queſtion, I ſhall attempt to ſtate the caſe more at large, in hope that it may prove a bleſſing to thoſe whoſe feelings are deſcribed.

Divine withdrawings make an important part of the plan on which God acts in leading his people to glory; and they are often as thorns and briars to the Chriſtian in his paſſage through the wilderneſs. They imply that the perſon who labours under them is a real diſciple of Chriſt: for ſpiritual

bleſſings can never be withdrawn from any man but him on whom they have been previouſly beſtowed. Yes, he is a believer; and though now ſmarting under his Father's rod, yet once it was well with him. He was indulged with ſuch a ſight of Calvary, and of the crimſon ſtreams of ſalvation flowing from the heart of Jeſus, as he can never totally forget. The cup of his joy was then full and overflowing. He delighted in thinking and talking of God and divine things. He could get near to God in holy duties, and with humble confidence cry, Abba, Father! And he could even have cheerfully ſacrificed every thing on earth for the ſake of Jeſus. *But how is the gold become dim! How is the fine gold changed!*

Now a ſad reverſe of things has taken place. He is cold, formal and remiſs in all duties. The love and zeal which once brightened his proſpects and gladdened his heart, have, for a time, loſt their vigour. The Spirit of God withholds his reviving influence; and the very ſpring of joy ſeems dried up. Secret prayer, once his frequent employment and delight, is too often neglected, and if conſcience upbraid, ſilly excuſes are framed to juſtify the omiſſion. Sometimes, indeed, he bows the knee in private, but his heart is heavy; it cannot riſe to God. He utters the ſolemn words of prayer, but forgets even what he is about. While his thoughts are wandering, he ceaſes from the duty, and preſently again recollecting himſelf, like a man who has been aſleep in a ſtrange place, he rouſes, and wonders where he is. At beſt, prayer is hurried over as a taſk; much of that important buſineſs which a Chriſtian has to tranſact with God at the throne of grace, is neglected, and ſupplications for the church, for particular friends, and particular bleſſings, are forgotten. The word of God is paſſed by; or, if read, it is done in a hurry, and without attention. He attends the miniſtry of the goſpel; but ſometimes gives way to drowſineſs; and ſometimes, inſtead of hearing or knowing what is ſaid, he ſuffers a multitude of fooliſh or vain things to occupy his thoughts. If a preacher, he is, on the people's account, aſſiſted in public duties, but brings no abiding ſavour of divine things with him out of the pulpit. He walks in darkneſs. He does not ſee the gracious countenance of Jeſus ſmiling on him as formerly. Dark chilling clouds of ſpiritual adverſity intercept the rays of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and ſpread a melancholy gloom over his path.

He may or may not, for aught he knows, belong to the family of God. Sometimes the queſtion will preſent itſelf to his mind, and he then feels a momentary uneaſineſs; but he is not properly roufed: he remains languid and dull, as before.

But, bleſſed be God, the real Chriſtian even in ſuch a ſtate diſcovers ſome ſymptoms of ſpiritual life. Dull and ſtupid as he may be, there are moments when he cannot help grieving and mourning over his ſad declenſions,—moments when he looks back, and though he ſcarcely perceives it himſelf, ſighs out a wiſh, *that it were with him as in months paſt, as in the days when the Lord preſerved him.* Yea, now and then he cannot help offering a petition or two, with ſome degree of earneſtneſs, for a revival of the work of God in his heart.—He cannot be really ſatisfied without the divine preſence. Thou mourner in Zion, let us conſider what means are proper to be adopted, in order to thy reſtoration and repoſſeſſion of communion with God.

We ſhould, on this and every occaſion, remember that the means we uſe are but means: it is the bleſſing of God that muſt render them effectual. I do not wiſh by this remark to encourage the vain hope of the hypocrite, who, when reproved for his formality in the ways of God, pleads as an excuſe, that he is unable to revive or renew his own ſoul. A man of true piety dares not act thus. He feels and confeſſes his inability, but at the ſame time he is deſirous to uſe thoſe means which are moſt likely to obtain the divine bleſſing. The grand catholicon, or univerſal remedy for all ſpiritual diſeaſes, is faith in Chriſt. He is the Phyſician of ſouls; and he can, and does, kindly heal all, however miſerable and wretched, who look to him for relief. While the eye of faith is fixed on his glorious perſon, character and offices, we cannot be unhappy. And if, through the power of temptation, or the prevalence of indwelling ſin, we experience awful declenſions of the power of godlineſs in our ſouls, there is no way of obtaining a revival, but by looking again to Chriſt. God is determined to honour his Son Jeſus. No ſinner can be ſaved but by him. No ſinner can find reſt or peace but in him. If therefore we make uſe of the wiſeſt means to obtain communion with God, without looking through them, and above them, to Chriſt, they will prove at laſt only ſnares and traps, by which we have deceived and ruined our ſouls. Let us beware of uſing them

in a legal ſpirit, or making a Saviour of them, leſt, inſtead of leading us to God, they ſhould lead us down to hell. Jeſus muſt be the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of all our hopes and enjoyments. Means are only ſo far uſeful as they may aſſiſt us in looking to him. They can never be uſeful to us at all without the ſpecial bleſſing of the Holy Spirit: with that bleſſing they may do wonders. I ſpeak thus, becauſe our earthly hearts are prone to ſtop ſhort of Chriſt, and to expect comfort and reſt in almoſt any thing.—O beware of harbouring in your boſom, even for a moment, any kind or degree of ſatisfaction, unleſs it be derived from Chriſt, and renders his bleſſed name more and more precious to your ſoul. If you are enabled to keep this caution in view, I truſt that what I now write ſhall not be written in vain.

To you whoſe caſe I have attempted to deſcribe, I would in the firſt place ſay, *Examine and inquire into the cauſes of your preſent mournful ſtate, in order that you may pray againſt them.* Survey your paſt conduct towards God. You have in former times enjoyed the comforts and pleaſures ariſing from a ſenſe of the divine favour; but perhaps you have reſted in them as your God, or as if you ſuppoſed that nothing further was to be ſought after; and God, to convince you of your folly, has cut down the props on wich you were leaning. Perhaps your enjoyments made you, through the depravity of your nature, proud, overbearing, and cenſorious in your carriage, to your chriſtian brethren; and God has removed them, in order to humble you, and that his fear may be before your eyes. You have enjoyed aſſiſtance and enlargement in ſpiritual duties; but probably you were not thankful for theſe things. They became common and you eſteemed them too lightly; and now God is teaching you by painful experience to be more ſenſible of their value, that you may give him *the honour due to his name.* Or while you were thus indulged, perhaps you became too ſolicitous with God about ſome worldly good, and *he has granted your request and ſent leanneſs into the ſoul.* It is poſſible that theſe and other things may have combined together, to introduce the languor of which you complain; but whatever may have robbed you of your felicity, it is neceſſary that you ſhould ſearch it out, that you may be the better able to ſeek its removal. This examination, however, will not be likely to ſucceed, unleſs at

the ſame time we inquire alſo of God. Like Job, we muſt *ſay unto God, Shew me wherefore thou contendest against me.*—He can bring many things to our recollection, which would otherwiſe eſcape us. He can throw light upon every circumſtance, and eaſily diſcover the root of bitterneſs, whach has ſprung up, and troubled, and defiled us.

Secondly, *However cold and dull you may find yourſelf in ſecret prayer, yet perſevere in it.* None but thoſe who have been tried in the ways of God, can form an idea of the numerous difficulties which the chriſtian meets with in drawing near to the mercy-ſeat. Satan is ever at his elbow, watching for an opportunity to gain ſome advantage over him.—When we are in a languid ſtate, he often whiſpers in our ears, "It is of no uſe to pray now—defer it till you are in a better frame." Sometimes you find, no doubt, ſuch ſluggiſhneſs in your heart, that you can hardly perſuade yourſelf to begin.—And ſometimes you are ready to think that God has ſhut out your prayer, becauſe he does not appear to favour you as in times paſt; but be aſſured of this, that to omit prayer, is to leave the plain path of duty, and to forſake your own mercies. If but one ſentence in fifty come in a lively manner from the heart; if you can do nothing but complain to God that you know not how to pray; if you can only proſtrate yourſelf before him, and wiſh to pray, or even wiſh that you had a deſire to pray; it is better to keep on in this manner, than not attempt to pray at all. If Satan can prevail with you to leave off, there is no knowing whither he may lead you; therefore keep on; and remember, for your inſtruction, what is written in the Pſalms, *God will regard the prayer of the deſtitute and not deſpiſe their prayer.* Remember alſo, that grace is free, and our ſucceſs depends on the interceſſion of Chriſt.

Thirdly, *Select ſuch portions of God's word as are adapted to your caſe, and read them over and over, and make them the ſubjects of frequent meditation.* Many profeſſing people make a ſort of lottery-book of the Bible; they open it at random, and think the firſt paſſage they caſt their eyes on, to be deſigned of God for them. But this is really tempting God. No man in his ſenſes, who is labouring under any bodily complaint, will preſume to think that the firſt medicine he caſts his eyes on in a druggiſt's ſhop, muſt at all events be proper for him. And why we ſhould preſume to approach the Bible in ſuch a

manner, I know not. *All* the preſcriptions contained in that bleſſed volume, are intended for thoſe who are willing to make uſe of them; and are ſuited to their various ſituations, and their different degrees of grace. The language of the Holy Spirit is, *Whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* I take it for granted that you have no reſerve. You are willing to take God as your God, and that too upon his own plan—You wiſh ſin to be ſubdued, and to have your heart devoted to God. Then freely take whatever you find in the Scripture ſuited to your caſe, and doubt not that God deſigned you ſhould do ſo. Conſider, particularly, the 42d, 43d, 51ſt, 77th, 85th, 103d, 130th, and 139th Pſalms; alſo, Iſaiah, chapter the 41ſt; Jeremiah the 31ſt; Micah the 7th; and Hebrews the 12th. Theſe are mentioned as ſpecimens only. The word of God contains a boundleſs ſtore, which the more it is uſed, the more abundant ſatisfaction it will yield.

Fourthly, *Have recourſe to ſome prudent and experienced friend or minister, for converſation and prayer.* In days of old it was the cuſtom of thoſe who feared the Lord, to ſpeak often one to another; and *the Lord hearkened, and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.* Cloſe, ſerious converſation frequently proves a greater bleſſing than many are aware. I know indeed, that in the preſent day it is difficult to determine where we may freely unboſom ourſelves. The converſation of many profeſſors has ſo little of God in it, that, to him who is mourning the abſence of Chriſt, it appears diſguſting. But if you have a friend or miniſter at hand, of an affable diſpoſition, and who lives near to God, eſteem him as an invaluable treaſure. Converſe with him freely, and get him to pray with and for you. He may be inſtrumental in diſcovering to you the ſecret windings of ſin, and the operations of grace, or in rekindling in your breaſt earneſt deſires after Jeſus, and cloſer conformity to his bleſſed image.

Fifthly, *Set apart ſome extraordinary ſeaſons for reading and prayer.* The propriety of this, in times of diſtreſs, is, with reſpect to nations and churches, generally ſeen; and it is equally proper for individuals. Half a day's buſineſs, or half a night's ſleep, is no great ſacrifice to make for this purpoſe. Our bleſſed Lord, under the preſſure of ſpiritual concerns,

continued all night in prayer to God."* It would be well if our dull ſouls could imitate him in this. But what we do in this way ought not to be done at random. We ſhould beforehand fix upon ſome orderly method. Prayer ſhould be accompanied with the reading of ſelect portions of the Bible, and other books ſuitable to the occaſion. Owen on indwelling Sin, or on the 130th Pſalm, Polhill's Precious Faith, or Romaine's Life of Faith, will furniſh you with much that is very ſuitable and excellent. I mention theſe, not to the excluſion of other valuable treatiſes, but becauſe they are in moſt people's hands. An intermixture of reading and prayer, in ſuch a manner as your prudence may ſuggeſt, will be likely to render theſe ſeaſons uſeful and pleaſant.

Laſtly, *Though, in the uſe of theſe means, you will probably meet with your moments of diſcouragement, and find in yourſelf much to contend with; yet do not caſt away your confidence, but wait, and hope for, and expect the divine bleſſing.* The Lord whom you ſeek, does not *deſpiſe the day of ſmall things.* He may ſee it fit to try, for a time, your faith and patience. But if you forſake him, to whom will you go? Where can you obtain that which your ſoul deſires? Remember that though Jeſus Chriſt at firſt rebuked the woman of Canaan, who cried after him; yet afterwards he granted her all ſhe aſked. Remember alſo the parable of the unjuſt judge and the importunate widow. Jeſus has a compaſſionate heart. You have no reaſon to doubt his willingneſs to help you. In ſo doing, you diſhonor him, and diſtreſs yourſelf. Therefore, *wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thy heart.—Wait, I ſay, on the Lord.*

IMLAH.

* *Luke vi.* 12.

A MEMOIR

Of the Lord's gracious Dealings with ELIZABETH LASKEY, *late of Ray-ſtreet, Clerkenwell; who departed to a bleſſed immortality on Thurſday, April 2, 1795, in the ſixty-fourth year of her age.*

DIVINE grace produces in the heart the moſt benign and generous principles. It teaches its happy poſſeſſor to weep with them that weep, and to rejoice with them that rejoice. Next to the ſenſible preſence of the Holy Spirit on the ſoul, the believer cannot enjoy a more exalted pleaſure, than in ſeeing ignorant ſinners brought to the knowledge of the truth, and ſuffering ſaints ſupported and comforted in their various tribulations. To ſuch as are experimentally acquainted with the truth of this remark, the following Narrative will not be unacceptable. It contains a brief account of the Lord's goodneſs to one, who, though very poor and needy among men, was divinely enriched from her Saviour's fulneſs, and is now beholding his face without a vail.

ELIZABETH LASKEY, whoſe experience is the ſubject of theſe few pages, was born at Fowey, in Cornwall, in the year 1731. She continued in that awful ſtate of enmity and ignorance, in which all are by nature involved, until the month of April 1785, when it pleaſed God, by the grace of his Holy Spirit, to convince her of her need of Jeſus, as a Saviour, in a very remarkable manner. The Lord who had ſometime before taken her huſband, ſaw fit to lay his afflicting hand upon her only ſon, a child between five and ſix years of age; and the ſickneſs proved unto death. A few days before his deceaſe, the poor boy was particularly deſirous of ſeeing a gracious woman who had been a kind friend to his mother; but he was told it would be in vain to go for her then, as ſhe was gone to Spa-field chapel (the place of worſhip which ſhe conſtantly attended): on which, looking earneſtly on his mother, he ſaid, "Mother, *have you no God?*" "Yes, my dear!" ſhe replied. "*Then*," ſaid he, "*why have you never told me of him?* Why don't you go and ſerve him as Mrs. E. does? *Do mother, when I am dead, go where ſhe goes, and ſerve her God.*" On Mrs. E's. return from chapel,

ſhe came and ſpake to the little ſufferer concerning Jeſus, the ſinner's friend. He liſtened to her with deep attention and apparent joy. In a few days after, he was taken to the boſom of that compaſſionate Saviour, "who gathers the lambs in his arms—and even out of the mouths of babes and ſucklings ordaineth ſtrength."

On the Sunday after the child's departure, Mrs. E. kindly came to condole with the afflicted mother, and ſaid to her,—"Now I hope you will fulfil the dying requeſt of your child, and go with your burden of trouble to the houſe of God. With this requeſt ſhe complied, and went in the evening to Spa-field chapel. The miniſter was led to diſcourſe upon the words of Jeſus to the woman of Samaria,—"Whoſoever ſhall drink of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt," &c. The impreſſions which ſhe received from the Lord under the ſermon, are only to be conceived of by thoſe who can experimentally ſay, "He told me all that ever I did! Is not this the Chriſt?" "Then it was," ſaid ſhe, ſpeaking of this event with a grateful heart and weeping eyes, "I firſt ſaw my ſins to be exceeding ſinful, and felt the neceſſity of deliverance from them by the free grace of my Saviour. It appeared to me as if I was ſingled out from the reſt of the congregation; and ſo exactly was the preacher led to deſcribe my caſe, that, until I was aſſured to the contrary, I could not but think that Mrs. E. had been with him, and told him all my paſt conduct and my preſent circumſtances. I ſaw my loſt and undone condition as a ſinner; and, when the miniſter was ſetting forth the free love of Jeſus, in beſtowing his ſalvation, with all its bleſſings, on the poor and the periſhing, without money and without price, my heart ſent up many ſecret cries that I might be permitted to drink of the fountain of life; that I might thirſt no more after ſinful objects: and, I truſt, before the cloſe of the ſervice, the Lord gave me encouragement to look unto him, poor and vile as I was, for pardon and life. On my return home," added ſhe, "I kiſſed the cold lips of my dear boy's corpſe, and kneeling down, bleſſed that God who had put it into his heart to direct me where to go for comfort, when he ſhould be taken from me." Thus was that good word fulfilled in her experience—"In that day ſhall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind ſhall ſee out of obſcurity, and out of dark-

neſs: the meek alſo ſhall increaſe their joy in the Lord; and the poor among men ſhall rejoice in the Holy One of Iſrael."

From the above period, ſhe became a cloſe attendant upon the means of grace, and was ſoon after led into the liberty of the goſpel, ſo that ſhe could cheerfully adopt the language of David, and ſay, "Come and hear, all ye that love God, and I will declare what he hath done for my ſoul."

Such is the mercy with which our heavenly Father tempers the ſevereſt of his diſpenſations, that, though deprived of her huſband, and the ſon of her tender love, ſhe had yet one earthly comfort left, an only daughter, who was about eighteen years old at the time of her brother's deceaſe. This affectionate child had been to her mother what Ruth was to good old Naomi, the faithful partner of her deep diſtreſs; having, from her twelfth year, laboured hard to ſmooth the rugged path which Providence had appointed them to tread. But as yet ſhe knew not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. On her behalf many prayers and tears were poured out before the throne of mercy. Nor were they long unanſwered: for ſoon after, it pleaſed him "who hath the key of David, who openeth and no man ſhutteth," to open her heart under the preaching of his word, as he did that of Lydia of old, to attend to the things pertaining to ſalvation. From this time, the poor habitation in which they dwelt, became a Bethel; and often were their hearts uniting in thankful praiſes to God, when they had very little, and ſometimes nothing wherewith to refreſh their bodies. Happy ſouls! They knew the truth of Solomon's words,—"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a ſtalled ox, and hatred therewith."

"*Though meanly clad, and coarſely fed,*
And, like their Saviour, poor;
They would not change their goſpel bread,
For all the wordling's ſtore."

Thus did they go on in the delightful fellowſhip, of the goſpel for about four years, when death had his commiſſion to ſeparate them for a ſeaſon. This beloved daughter, dear by the ties of nature, but ſtill dearer by the indiſſoluble ties of grace, was called to her eternal reſt, in the 22d year of her age, having left a bleſſed teſtimony that ſhe had not believed in vain.

The afflicted parent, ſeeing her laſt earthly comfort expire, and being deprived of the ſtaff of her age, at a moment when ſhe wanted it moſt, was ſo oppreſſed by the ſuggeſtions of Satan, and the remaining corruptions of her heart, that for about ſix weeks ſhe was reduced to the brink of deſpair. Under theſe circumſtances, ſhe went one evening to the Rev. Mr. Willis's ſociety, (of which ſhe was ſome years a member) when it ſo happened that he gave an exhortation on Pſalm cxxxviii. 1, 2, 3. "I will praiſe thee with my whole heart; before the gods will I ſing praiſe unto thee. I will worſhip towards thy holy temple, and praiſe thy name for thy loving-kindneſs and thy truth; for thou haſt magnified thy word above all thy name. In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul." From that memorable night, ſo divinely was her ſoul ſet at liberty, that doubts and fears were no more ſuffered to prevail. So true is that word, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Let the chriſtian pilgrim, therefore, expect, while in this vale of tears, to meet with pilgrim's fare. His ſevereſt trials often lead to his brighteſt enjoyments, and his happieſt moments frequently are the forerunners of his ſharpeſt exerciſes. Thus it was with our departed ſiſter.—She had been for ſome years afflicted with a bleeding cancer on the ſide of her neck, and ſhortly after the Lord had ſo graciouſly raiſed her from the borders of deſpair, ſhe was confined to her room to go out no more. For, in the month of November 1789, her diſorder ariſing to ſuch a height that a veſſel in her neck burſt, ſhe bled inceſſantly for ſeveral hours, ſo that it was expected ſhe could not long ſurvive. It pleaſed God, however, to revive her in ſome degree; though from that time her right arm withered, and became totally uſeleſs. Sharp as theſe afflictions were, ſhe was not permitted to murmur; on the contrary, ſhe could habitually ſay, through infinite grace,—

"*My Father's hand prepares the cup,*
And what he wills is beſt."

Yea, ſo ſweetly did ſhe ſpeak of the love of Jeſus, that her converſation was delightful both to miniſters and private chriſtians who attended her. And ſo kind was the Lord, that

he not only gave her large ſupplies of grace for her ſoul, but he ſo inclined the hearts of his people to miniſter to her neceſſities, that ſhe never was deſtitute of ſuch relief as the nature of her ſituation required.

To hear her dwell upon the glory and precioufneſs of Jeſus, was truly refreſhing. Even when agonizing with the moſt acute pains of body, ſhe would cry out, in the language of grateful admiration, "Let none deſpair of mercy, ſince I am not denied it! Let no poor ſinner fear to come to Jeſus, ſince he has received one ſo guilty and worthleſs as I am!

"*O may I never once forget,*
What a poor worm I am;
From death and hell redeem'd by blood,
The blood of God's dear Lamb!"

"I long to be with my Jeſus!"

"*How long, dear Saviour, O how long,*
Will that bright hour delay?
Fly ſwiftly round, ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day."

Then, as if chiding her impatience, ſhe would ſay,—

"*Tarry his leiſure then,*
Although he ſeems to ſtay;
A moment's intercourſe with him,
Thy griefs will overpay.

"*Bleſt is the man, O Lord,*
That stays himſelf on thee:
Who waits for thy ſalvation, Lord,
Shall thy ſalvation ſee."

The paſſages of ſcripture particularly bleſſed to her ſoul, were the 43d and 51ſt of Iſaiah—the 37th of Ezekiel—the 7th of Micah—and eſpecially that precious text, Heb. xiii. 5. "I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee!" a promiſe ſo remarkably fulfilled to her, even as to temporal ſupplies, that, though on the 5th of November, 1789, when the Lord was

pleaſed to lay her on her ſick bed, ſhe had not one penny in the world, yet during her long and painful illneſs, ſhe never knew the want of any neceſſary comfort. "This (ſhe thankfully ſaid) is the wonderful mercy of my God; and

"*'Tis his daily care, his helpleſs ſheep to feed,*
To purify their ſpotted ſouls, and tend and gently lead."

"My Lord knows that I want purifying, and I am ſure that when I am tried I ſhall come forth as gold, for he hath given me that good word of promiſe to reſt upon,—"Thou ſhalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a ſhock of corn cometh in, in his ſeaſon." (Job, v. 26.)—"The Lord is my light and my ſalvation, whom ſhall I fear? The Lord is the ſtrength of my life, of whom then ſhall I be afraid?"—"Yea, my Maker is my huſband, the Lord of hoſts is his name." Then addreſſing thoſe who were around her bed, ſhe ſaid, "I love you all, my dear chriſtian friends; but I long to leave you, that I may go to the preſence of Jeſus.

"*And when to that bright world I riſe,*
And join the anthems in the ſkies,
Above the reſt this note ſhall ſwell,
My Jeſus hath done all things well."

On another occaſion, when the writer of this memoir came to viſit her, ſhe ſaid with much earneſtneſs, "O my father, I longed to ſee you once more, to tell you how good my Jeſus is to me. My pains of body are unutterable, but his preſence is ſo continually with me, that I drink of the cup of full aſſurance of my intereſt in his love. I have not a remaining doubt on my mind. O tell to all around, that the Lord has been, and ſtill is, ſo good to me, an unworthy ſinner, that I can look death in the face with joy. I long for the welcome meſſenger to cloſe my eyes on this world, that I may ſee Jeſus as he is."

Being for ſome time before her death incapable of taking any thing but liquids, ſhe was almoſt reduced to a ſkeleton. Nor was it without much difficulty that ſhe could utter a ſentence. The placid ſmile, however, which appeared on her countenance, ſufficiently indicated the inward peace of her

mind, and the ardent longings of her ſoul for immortality.—When enabled to drop a word or two, ſhe would ſay, "I am happily content"—"Precious Jeſus! not my will, but thine be done"—"I am ſolidly happy; not a doubt or a cloud left"—"Come, O my Saviour, come away." In one of my laſt interviews with her ſhe ſaid, "You will ſoon hear of my departure, and *then rejoice*—Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly!"

At length the long-wiſhed-for day arrived. On Thurſday, April 2d, 1795, ſhe was called to leave this vale of tears. The approach of death, of which ſhe was perfectly ſenſible, inſtead of alarming her fears, excited more fervent deſires to be with Jeſus. And having, like the dying patriarch, ſolemnly bleſſed thoſe around her, with a gentle ſigh ſhe breathed out her ſoul into the boſom of her God and Saviour. At her own requeſt, her remains were interred in Bunhill Fields, where a funeral oration was delivered on the occaſion, to a numerous and affected auditory.

"Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow."

April 10th, 1795. J. A. K.

[*From the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.*]

ON RELIGIOUS FEELINGS.

THE power of religion has ever intereſted the feelings and paſſions. Where there is the life of true godlineſs there will neceſſarily be ſtrong emotions of ſoul. It becomes us to be the friends of a warm, animated piety, in oppoſition to a cold, philoſophic religion. Revived, living Chriſtians have their hearts engaged and well affected in the cauſe of the Redeemer. Such as are alive unto *God*, are diſtinguiſhed for warmth of affection. They find, by experience, that religion is a vital principle accompanied with heart-felt ſenſations, ſuch as holy complacency in divine things, and godly ſorrow for ſin. Where ſuch emotions as theſe are not excited, there is reaſon to apprehend, the heart is not the ſubject of a work of grace. Let us conſider,

1. Such as are alive unto God, do not content themſelves with *mere orthodoxy.*

Correct opinion does not of itſelf conſtitute vital godlineſs. It is, indeed, neceſſary that tenets be correct. We mean not to diſparage the importance of a ſpeculative belief in the cloſe doctrines of grace. But correct opinion muſt not be reſted in, as embracing the ſum and ſubſtance of vital religion. A ſpeculative faith does not always intereſt and engage the religious feelings of the heart. It is frequently unfaithful, bearing none of the fruits of holineſs, conſiſting in pious exerciſes. While men's underſtandings are rightly inſtructed, their hearts are often cold and lifeleſs. Sometimes, indeed, there will be a warm zeal in advocating the truths of the goſpel, when the life and power of religion are wanting.

An orthodox faith is not neceſſarily connected with heartfelt piety. And we ſhould be careful not to content ourſelves with an underſtanding of the great principles of divine revelation. This is often no more than a knowledge which puffeth up. The excellent doctrines of the goſpel, are frequently viewed with a philoſophic coldneſs and indifference. Theſe doctrines, alſo, are often received with emotions widely different in their nature, from the feelings of the religious ſpirit. They often produce temporary and ſhortlived joy; like the ſeed ſown in ſtony places, which ſoon ſprings up, and wanting root and moiſture, when the ſun is up, is ſcorched, and ſoon withers away.

Some would ſatisfy themſelves with a religion of the underſtanding which leaves the heart unmoved. But ſuch a religion has no vital warmth. It imparts no cheriſhing comforts to the ſoul. It is a cold act of underſtanding, and has none of the joy and peace of believing. We may entertain conſiſtent views of the leading principles of the goſpel, and have a knowledge of the connected ſyſtem there contained, and yet be ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs, ſtrangers to ſaving light, and deſtitute of the feelings of an evangelical temper. We muſt not, then, place religion wholly in right ſpeculative opinions. We muſt not make it to conſiſt in a mere act of the underſtanding. Though a right underſtanding of the connected and conſiſtent ſyſtem of goſpel truth, be a matter of the utmoſt moment, yet we muſt not reſt ſatisfied

with this, but conſider correſponding feelings of heart, as being alſo eſſentially requiſite. Hence we may conſider

II. True religion is a *feeling ſenſe* of the excellence of divine truth.

The ſpirit of the goſpel, being wrought into the heart, conſtitutes the chriſtian temper. A pious diſpoſition is every where, and in all perſons, the ſame; having the important doctrines of the goſpel, for its foundation, and ground work. Revived, experimental chriſtians, muſt neceſſarily enter into the ſame views of the goſpel, ſo far as they underſtand it.—The ſame truths are written not with ink, but with the ſpirit of the living God, not in tables of ſtone, but in fleſhly tables of the heart. Chriſtians, ſo far as they have the ſpirit of Chriſt, are perfectly joined together in the ſame mind and in the ſame judgment, or ſentiment. Their views unite and terminate in the great diſtinguiſhing truths of the goſpel.—For the chriſtian temper involves in it theſe truths, and where they are explained and laid upon the underſtanding, they muſt neceſſarily propound themſelves to the acceptance of the pious mind.

Religious affections accompany a ſpiritual diſcernment of the great things contained in the goſpel. Evangelical ſentiment has a kindly influence to ſtir up gracious exerciſes.—Where the goſpel is embraced in its purity, it has an enlivening and animating effect upon our nature. The ſoul cannot remain torpid and inoperative. There will be activity where the pure goſpel has its proper effect. The ſoul will be enflamed with the genial warmth of piety. It will have vital exerciſes, ſuch as are ſenſibly felt, and experimentally known. David ſays, "Oh, how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day." The apoſtle Paul giving an account of his religious experiences, ſays, "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man." Bright views of goſpel ſentiment awaken delightful ſenſations. Saints find a rich entertainment in contemplating the diſtinguiſhing and eſſential truths of the goſpel.—And this contemplation muſt no doubt conſtitute a great part of their happineſs, in the kingdom of glory.

The good word is a quickening ſpirit to ſuch as have taſted its power. It quickens chriſtian graces, and gives life and ſpirit to devout affections. Great is the joy and peace of believing. Erroneous views of the goſpel ſcheme of ſenti-

ment, either leave the affections unengaged, and ſink the ſoul into a ſtate of apathy, without feeling or emotion; or elſe awaken unhallowed paſſions. But a juſt apprehenſion of the truths brought to light in revelation, furniſhes reviving views, and excites feeling, vital exerciſes. Such precious truth diſcloſes itſelf, from the word of God, to the minds of the intellectual and holy creation, as contributes to their preſervation in holineſs, and opens a ſource of noble and exalted entertainment.

The word of life, is dear and precious to the truly pious.—They feed and feaſt upon it. With a pleaſing ſatisfaction, they inveſtigate and entertain its ſublime doctrines. Such diſcoveries on moral ſubjects then preſent themſelves to their minds, as to inſpire them with joys with which a ſtranger doth not intermeddle. Hence, by diligently and prayerfully attending to the good word of grace, and apprehending its excellence, they become fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord. The Holy Spirit alone, diſcloſes the moral exiſtence of divine truth to the underſtanding. And when he brings the word home with power, and cauſes it to be ſeen in its ſpirituality and beauty, it attracts the affections and becomes inſtrumental of ſtirring up to a warm and vigorous piety.

III. Saints have a *feeling ſenſe* of the beauty of *God's* perfections, manifeſted in his works of providence and grace.

God is pleaſed to reveal himſelf by means of his glorious works, both of creation and redemption. The traces of his character are inſcribed in the book of nature, but moſt of all, in the volume of Revelation, and in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. He hath ſet himſelf forth as the eternal ſource of being and bleſſedneſs. He hath made all things with a view to diſplay himſelf, and promote his declarative glory, that he might be known to his rational creatures, and that in his light his children may have light. What a glorious diſplay of his moral excellence, is made in the ſtupendous works of nature and grace!

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. God, in his excellence, is revealed only to ſuch as are ſpiritually minded.—Though ſinners ſee the traces of his being, yet they diſcern

not his goodneſs; or, ſee him not in the beauty and lovelineſs of his moral character. But ſuch as are pure in heart, ſee God in his unſpeakable excellence.

And thus ſeeing him, they are inſpired with ineffable delight. Complacential affection ſprings from a ſpiritual view of the Supreme Good. Such a view gives birth to joy and hope. Religious affections are enkindled in the light of his countenance. Do not wonder if his children glow with affection, and breathe an animated piety. They have found him whom their ſoul loveth. They have come to their ſoul-reviving reſt. God ſtands revealed to their view as the *greateſt* and *beſt* in the univerſe. He has become the beloved object which fills and enraptures their minds. This ſight and ſenſe of God gives ardour to the religious ſpirit. It excites the fervours of love; elevates the ſoul with a joyful hope, warms the heart with the emotions of holy deſire, and occaſions meltings of ſorrow and contrition for ſin.

No wonder that the ſeed to ſerve the Lord have been diſtinguiſhed for ſtrict ſentiments and manners and been conſidered *ſingular*, by reaſon of their devout frames, and the movings of affection. It would ſeem that a proper apprehenſion of God, muſt produce ſome ſuch diſtinguiſhing traits in the character of thoſe who are accounted to him for a generation. Such as have ſeen the Lord of Hoſts, will differ from the cold-hearted men of the word, and make it evident that they are chiefly delighted in God. They will make it manifeſt, that a diſcernment of the moral excellence of the Divine character, gives the ſpring to their activities, and calls forth their ſweeteſt comforts and deſires.

IV. Saints find by experience, they have *outflowings* of deſire after God.

This will be evident by attending to the exereiſes of men of God, recorded in ſcripture; and eſpecially of the ſweet Pſalmiſt of Iſrael. In his Pſalms we have an account of his holy breathings. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee." "O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee: my ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirſty land, where no water is: to ſee thy power and thy glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in thy ſanctuary." lxiii. 1, 2. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after

thee, O God. My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God; when ſhall I come and appear before God?" xlii. 1, 2 — When his ſoul was in great diſquietude, his heart was ſtill intent on God. "I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar." xlii. 6.

He ſeems, at times, to have been brought into grievous ſtraits: "My ſoul cleaveth unto the duſt." But ſtill he had vehement and longing deſires, flowing out unto God. He, likewiſe, enjoyed peculiar enlargement. "I will run in the way of thy commandments, when thou ſhalt enlarge my heart," "He brought me up alſo out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſhed my goings. And he hath put a new ſong in my mouth, even praiſe to the living God!"

Who can read the book of Pſalms, without noticing the ſtrong and ardent aſpirations of the heaven-born ſoul?

We find, likewiſe, Job longing for communion with God. "O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his ſeat! I would order my cauſe before him and fill my mouth with arguments." xxiii. 3, 4. In reference to ſpiritual enlargement, are Elihu's words to Job: "Even ſo would he have removed thee out of the ſtrait into a broad place, where there is no ſtraitneſs."

In Canticles the church ſays: "Or ever I was aware, my ſoul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib." This denotes the peculiar liberty which the godly ſometimes acquire in their approach to God. And in general it marks out the breathings and raiſed deſires and hopes, which it is common for thoſe to have, who have taſted that the Lord is gracious.

Saints are ſaid to be *near*, and to draw *near* to God. This nearneſs muſt imply communion with God, in holy and longing deſires and affections. Such as walk near to him feel their ſouls going out heaven-ward. Add further, a feeling, animated religion is ſet forth in theſe words: "They that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength: they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not faint;" Iſaiah xl. 31 — This language is expreſſive of peculiar freedom in devotion. It repreſents a ſoul freed from the clogs of earth and ſenſe, and ſoaring on the pinions of a ſtrong and victorious faith.—

Such is the enlagement which God gives his children. He cauſes their youth to be renewed like the eagles; gives freſh and renewed ſtrength and delight in his ſervice.

REFLECTIONS.

1. There is need of a care leſt we damp the ardour of a religious ſpirit. A careleſs, unchriſtian walk cripples the energy of the ſoul, and brings it down from its exalted exerciſes, to low and carnal objects. A worldly ſpirit is unfriendly to the ardours of piety. Sinful and carnal hankerings and enjoyments, abate the warmth of vital godlineſs. Vain amuſements, likewiſe, ſerve to cool religious affections, and obſcure the lamp of grace in the heart. Religious exerciſes are deadened by theſe and ſimilar cauſes. Devout hungerings and thirſtings are not cheriſhed, but rather diminiſhed, by a life of ſinful conformity to the world, in its vain recreations and ſenſual delights. We muſt abſtain from theſe things, if we would preſerve in lively exerciſe the vital principle. Chriſtian graces need care and cultivation. If neglected, they ſoon loſe their luſtre, and appear like the dying taper. A lax and careleſs way of living muſt bring on ſpiritual decay. Chriſtians ſhould be ſtrict in their diſcipline. They ſhould avoid conformity to the men of the world. They have a vineyard to keep, which calls for much labour and ſelf-denial. Let them attend to their ſpiritual huſbandry, if they would have their ſouls as a well-watered garden. Let them not have their deſires running out after the creature, after ſelfiſh and ſinful objects, and gratifications. Such vain hankerings and purſuits, will certainly chill their pious affections, and cauſe a languor in their religious exercciſes and comforts.

2. A vigorous, animated piety ever lies expoſed to the charge of *enthuſiaſm*. The truly religious muſt be prepared to meet this reproach. Such as are for a cold, philoſophic religion, will deem the workings of the pious heart to be flights, partaking of imagination, and tranſient in their nature. The living members of Chriſt's myſtical body, they who have given the beſt evidence of their being living ſtones in the temple of God, have commonly had an enthuſiaſtic ſpirit aſcribed to them. On account of their fervency, they have been ſuppoſed to exceed the bounds of reaſon. Their noble and elevated acts of faith and love have been viewed as the reveries of a heated imagination. Their deadneſs to the world,

their abſtemiouſneſs, mortified lives, and their hardſhips and conflicts under the croſs, have been frequently deemed a miſguided zeal and affected ſingularity. The apoſtle Paul was thought by ſome to be *beſide himſelf*. Counting all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus, and being willing to ſuffer the loſs of all things, that he might win Chriſt, he was ſuppoſed to be tranſported beyond himſelf, and to have exceeded the bounds of ſober reaſon. The ſame apprehenſion was entertained concerning Chriſt. Some of his acquaintance, ſeeing him ſo intent upon his work, as to go out of doors to preach to the people, when he was already ſpent with his watchings and public ſervices, came out to lay hold upon him, ſaying, *He is beſide himſelf*. He failed of taking his neceſſity meals, for the ſake of ſeizing an opportunity to feed and inſtruct the multitude. And this was thought to indicate a tranſport of paſſion, not altogether regulated by the dictates of ſobriety and moderation. Theſe examples may teach animated Chriſtians to expect the charge of enthuſiaſm. Think it not ſtrange if it be ſometimes inſinuated, that they are beſide themſelves. In the eye of carnal reaſon, the workings of a warm benevolence in the chriſtian cauſe, appear in the light of partial derangement, proceeding from a diſordered ſtate of the affections.

3. We ſhall add a word concerning the importance of maintaining a meek and humble walk with God. Such as have precious diſcoveries of divine things, ſhould take heed that they be not lifted up with pride. The genuine tendency of grace upon the heart, is to produce humbleneſs of mind. And yet, through remaining corruptions, there is danger of making the vital exerciſes of grace an occaſion of ſelf-exaltation. Let chriſtians be guarded againſt this temptation. Let them not make a merit of their duties and frames, nor magnify themſelves on account of their ſpiritual attainments. A proud phariſaical temper, has ever proved an enemy to ſouls, and ſhould excite much alarm. Chriſtians have a warfare to endure with this formidable enemy. They have a conflict within themſelves, to keep under the workings of a ſelf-righteous ſpirit. And this conflict proves to be none of the leaſt and moſt painful part of the chriſtian warfare. But let them be animated in this ſtruggle; keeping in conſtant remembrance, that a legal ſpirit mars and eats out the life of all true religion. Let

them live near to God,—cultivating meekneſs and modeſty under the reception of his undeſerved gifts and graces. Their ſenſible comforts and gracious frames ſpring from the fountain of all good. God deals out the meaſure of their faith.—He is the life of their ſpiritual joys and exerciſes. In his infinite mercy, he enlarges their hearts to have intimate and ſweet communion with himſelf. He gives them to participate in the influences and gifts of the Holy Spirit. When in ſtraitneſs, he brings them out of a ſtrait into a broad place.—When ſinking in the miry clay, he brings them forth, and eſtabliſhes their goings. And when they cry to him from the belly of hell, he cauſes their prayer to come in unto him, in his holy temple. Let them humbly thank and praiſe his holy name, for his marvellous grace, which hath wrought them for the ſelf-ſame thing. The meek will he guide in judgment; he will beautify the meek with ſalvation. He that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted. Y. Z.

LIVING MORE IMPORTANT THAN DYING.

IT is a common remark, that it is a great thing to die. To thoſe who believe the ſcriptures, the ſcene of exchanging worlds is conſidered as peculiarly intereſting. And it undoubtedly is ſo, as well as ſolemn and affecting to nature.—While the body returns to the duſt as it was, the ſpirit aſcends to God who gave it, to be diſpoſed of for an endleſs eternity. The ſoul is diſpoſſeſſed of its organ, and haſtened to the eternal world to be completely bleſſed, or to receive her portion in endleſs miſery. A ſcene like this muſt undoubtedly be conſidered as ſolemn and intereſting. Still, is not *living* more important and intereſting than *dying?* Is it not a great thing to *live* as well as to *die?* However important may be the ſcene of dying, let us enquire whether *living* be not ſtill more important.

Reflect, in the firſt place, that life is the time appointed for our day of probation; but death is not. In this world we have talents committed to us, with which we are required to "*occupy.*" Death is ſo far from being a ſtate of trial, that it is compared, by the Saviour, to the ſeaſon of *reſigning up* our ta-

lents. Is not an appointed ſeaſon for us to obtain a valuable object, more intereſting than any period after this ſeaſon is paſt? We remember, that the rich man, who lifted up his eyes in hell, and prayed for a drop of water to cool his tongue, was referred to his conduct in life-time. "Son, remember that thou, in thy life-time, receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things." It was not ſuggeſted, that his manner of death brought him to that place of torment, but his life.

Again—The day of judgment will have particular reference to life; and not to death. When we ſhall be ſummoned to the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, it will be, to give an account of the deeds done in the body. An inſpired writer tells us,—"We muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This refers us to life, and not to death. The meſſage of death is no other than a ſummons, ſent out by the judge to call us to the court of heaven. An indictment is always predicated upon previous conduct. The tranſactions therefore, for which we are arraigned, cannot have their ſpecial reference to death.—Indeed, there is not the leaſt hint in the whole Bible, that the judgment day will have any reference to our death.

And further—Life is the ſeaſon in which we have the calls and invitations of the goſpel ſet before us. That ſpeaks to us, *to-day*, while in life and health, and tells us, "Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of ſalvation." We are no where told that death is a day of ſalvation, or an accepted time. It is true, at death our ſtate is decided; but this deciſion is made altogether according to our treatment of the goſpel while in this life. God tells us, therefore, in his word, to ſeek him early—to hear his voice to-day, and not harden our hearts. Examine the whole preaching of Chriſt, of his prophets and apoſtles, and we ſhall find they ever *referred* their hearers to their duty in life. Would not the goſpel refer us to the moſt intereſting period? And would not the greateſt errand for which the Saviour came into the world, point us to the ſeaſon which is the moſt intereſting?

It may be added, alſo, that death is not a ſeaſon in which our conduct could be properly connected with eternal conſequences. For a moral agent to exhibit a character, chooſeth

offers of grace, or refuſe them, he muſt enjoy a ſeaſon of rational reflection. Truths muſt be placed before him, and the mind muſt rationally act in view of thoſe truths. And how can this be done, when the whole organ of nature has become unſtrung, and is under the ſtruggles of departing breath? Can we ſuppoſe, that the time when this body is becoming lifeleſs, and the ſoul aſcending to God who gave it, would be appointed by the Deity as a ſeaſon for the mind to exerciſe that change, upon which eternity is depending? No; "He hath made every thing beautiful in his ſeaſon."

As, therefore, life is the only appointed time of probation—as the day of judgment refers us to life, and not to death—as life is the only ſeaſon to which the calls of the goſpel refer us, and as death is not a proper time upon which things of eternal conſequence could be made to depend—then, *living* muſt be a more important ſeaſon than *dying*.

From the thought we have purſued, ſome intereſting reflections naturally follow. And,

1. Does not what we have been contemplating afford us ground to fear that many are ruined by overlooking the moſt important period of their exiſtence, and looking forward to a period that is leſs important? How numerous are thoſe who paſs very calmly on with the current of time, without concern with regard to living, while at the ſame time they will acknowledge that it is a great thing to die. View people near their end, and we may ſee a great part much more concerned about dying, than ever they were about living. When the grim meſſenger of death advances to ſtare them in the face, they will acknowledge they have now arrived to a period which they ever viewed important; but while in life and health, they will reſt without alarm, though God's law be ſounding louder than thunder in their ears, and while the Saviour is inviting them in the moſt pathetic terms. To meet death, having all that to do, at this diſtreſſing moment, which was required in a time of health and proſperity, muſt certainly be a moſt ruinous ſtep. And is it ſtrange that Satan ſhould uſe this ſtratagem, to enſnare unguarded ſouls? While he can lead people to paſs away life as a trifling thing, and place their views forward to death as the important period, well may he conſider them as a ſure prey to his fatal wiles. Let us then enquire, whether our anxiety with regard to a future ſtate, has not of-

ten referred us to a wrong period. And let us ſee that we avoid ſo deſtructive a deluſion.

2. Since there is ſo much more depending on life than on death, have we not reaſon to conclude that many, who have left this world with a ſtrong hope of ſalvation, have met with an eternal diſappointment? There is not the leaſt intimation throughout God's word, of any one being ſavingly changed while in the immediate agonies of death. Nor does the Bible mention but one inſtance of a change within a few hours of this period. At the Saviour's crucifixion, there were ſpecial reaſons for his making a miraculous diſplay of his grace. We know that the repentance of the dying thief was real, and his faith ſaving; but how deficient is the evidence that others are not deceived at this late hour, even though their external appearance be equally as favourable? When this frail ſyſtem is diſſolving by diſeaſe, wrecked with pain, and the mind conſequently weak and credulous, what more than *deluſion* can thoſe rationally expect, who through life have rejected and deſpiſed their Saviour? In theſe diſcompoſed moments, it is eaſy to imagine things to be real, which an omniſcient and holy Judge will never acknowledge. It is not ſtrange, that people ſhould ſpeak very rationally of the fading nature of the things of this world, and calmly reſign them up, when they are made ſenſible they can no longer enjoy them. From being under diſtreſs of body, and realizing the certainty of death, people in a chriſtian land, without the aid of true godlineſs, may reſign up their lives with great calmneſs, and do no more than many *heathens* have done. And indeed, it is not ſtrange that ſome, who are unprepared for heavenly felicity, ſhould even poſſeſs *great joy*, from viewing themſelves about to make ſo profitable an exchange as to go from a ſtate of pain and hopeleſs ſorrow into a ſtate of ineffable glory and bleſſedneſs. Numerous are the inſtances in which the ſparing hand of God has ſhewn us the deception of a ſick-bed repentance. Among thoſe who exhibit the greateſt evidence of a ſaving change, in view of approaching death, rare indeed is the inſtance that this evidence is not contradicted among thoſe who recover. It naturally follows,

3. That we have reaſon to conclude, that ſome who appear to die without a ſatisfactory evidence of their good eſtate, may meet with a happy change.—As we can give but little weight

to a hope that is gained in the hour of death, by one who has ſpent his whole life in ſin, ſo we are not called to give up thoſe as loſt, who have lived a life of exemplary piety, even though they may die under great darkneſs and doubt. As the wicked may be deceived reſpecting their good eſtate, why, on the other hand, may not the righteous be deceived? The proper time to form our judgment concerning characters in the ſight of God, we have ſeen, is at an earlier period than at death.—And muſt we not count him faithful who hath promiſed? "For he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee. Nor ſhall any pluck them out of my hands." We may reſt aſſured, that wherever there is a real union formed between Chriſt and the ſoul, while in life, it cannot be diſſolved in death.

4. Is life a more important ſeaſon than death?—Then we ought to concern ourſelves much more about living than about dying. Should not the moſt important object command our moſt ſpecial attention? If ſo, then, let the enquiry be, how ſhall I live? What ſhall I *now do*, that my ſoul may be ſaved? And not, how ſhall I die, that my laſt end may be like the righteous? Let it be our earneſt ſolicitude, how ſhall I now diſcharge my indiſpenſable duty? How ſhall I improve the precious moments of life and health? And not, how ſhall I improve the diſtreſſing moments of death? Reflect how much more can be done to the honour of our Maker and bleſſed Saviour, in the ſeaſon of life, than at the diſtreſſing ſcene of death. Hence, ſaid an ancient ſaint, "Death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day." Hence the apoſtle beſeeches us, by the mercy of God, that we preſent our bodies a *living* ſacrifice. Would it be wiſe in a huſbandman, who had retired to his field for the purpoſe of tilling his ground, for him to neglect his employment and buſy himſelf through the day in reflecting how he ſhould return home at night? If it would not, then we ought to concern ourſelves much more about living than about dying.—Hence,

5. It appears, we are now paſſing through the moſt intereſting ſcene we ſhall ever behold. It is true we are not advancing through the dark valley of the ſhadow of death; neither are our ears ſaluted by the awful ſound of the judgment

trumpet; nor do we see the silent dead bursting from their tombs. The dreadful Judge is not yet saying, in view of the assembled universe, to those on the right hand, come ye blessed of my Father—neither is he pronouncing to those on the left hand, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire. These awful scenes are yet to come. Still, the one through which we are passing is far more interesting than either of them. The present is the season on which eternal life or endless misery is absolutely depending. It is acknowledged that these future scenes, which are before us, will be vastly solemn and trying; but reflect, that they will be joyful or dreadful accordingly as we now lay the foundation. The books out of which we are to be judged, are now filling up. Would any one, therefore, have a view of the most momentous period of his existence,—he need only look round him at the present moment. The period has commenced. The scene is now passing before our eyes! O, let us realize how great a thing it is to live!

GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT

For Christians to labour for the conversion of the heathen, founded on Matt. iii. 9. "For I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

THE self-righteous Jews prided themselves greatly in their descent from Abraham. They claimed an exclusive right to the spiritual privileges of God's people. John the Baptist, seeing their error and folly, addressed them thus: "Think not to say, within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father, for I say unto you, *that God is able of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham.*" This passage denotes, that God is able to convert sinners, and to build up his church from the most unpromising materials. And although it might have its accomplishment in the conversion of some of those hardened Jews to whom John referred, was also illustrated in the success of the gospel, among idolatrous nations, under the ministry of the apostles, after Christ's ascension into heaven. The Gentile nations had, for many ages successively, been involved in the most dismal state of darkness, superstition and

idolatry. They are repreſented as *ſitting in the region and ſhadow of death.* They committed every ſpecies of abomination of which they were capable.

A very ſtriking deſcription is given of their character and conduct in the firſt chapter of Paul's epiſtle to the Romans.—They are repreſented as having "changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things.—They worſhipped all the hoſts of heaven—offered their children in ſacrifice to their idols. Yea, paid their homage to *Devils.** Indeed we cannot gain a clearer idea of their character, perhaps, in any part of the ſacred writiugs, than in Romans, firſt chapter, and eſpecially from the 29th verſe.—*Being filled with all unrighteouſneſs, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whiſperers, backbiters, haters of God, deſpiteful, proud, inventors of evil things, diſobedient to parents, without underſtanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.* Yet among theſe abominable nations, God raiſed up many ſpiritual children unto Abraham.

Upon the preaching of the goſpel, by the apoſtles, multitudes from among them were converted to Chriſt—forſook the worſhip of their dumb idols and demons—renounced their filthy practices and horrid impieties, and became the humble, penitent followers of Jeſus Chriſt, and the true worſhippers of the living God.

Churches were gathered to Chriſt—the holy inſtitutions of the goſpel ſtrictly obſerved, and many ſouls trained up for heaven, from thoſe regions and ſhadow of death, where Satan's ſeat had ſo eminently been, and where he had long led ſouls captive at his will.

Theſe marvellous effects of the goſpel upon the minds of thoſe once ſo inconceivably remote from all good, may ſerve as a very clear and ſtriking illuſtration of the paſſage under conſideration; "For I ſay unto you, God is able of theſe ſtones, to raiſe up children unto Abraham."

Some uſeful inferences may be made from this ſubject.

1. That miniſters and chriſtians ought not ro deſpair of the converſion of ſinners, in the moſt degenerate times. Nor

* 1 *Cor. x.* 26.

ſhould they ſink down in deſpondency, though they have long laboured and prayed for the revival of God's work, ſeemingly almoſt in vain. Since God has ſo frequently *of ſtones raiſed up children unto Abraham*, who can tell but this or that careleſs or hardened ſinner may yet be arreſted in his courſe of impiety, and be made a monument of ſovereign mercy? How often have thoſe who have ſpent their ſubſtance in riotous living, and long withſtood the calls and warnings of the goſpel, been brought to bow to the ſceptre of Jeſus of Nazareth?—Many inſtances of the like nature have taken place, in the late revivals of religion in theſe ſtates. Numbers are now among the viſible and the ſincere followers of Chriſt, who, for many years, appeared as unlikely to become chriſtians, were there nothing more than mere human means, as the ſtones are to ariſe into living men.

2. It may be inferred from this ſubject, that none ſhould give up their attempts to chriſtianize the heathen nations, though their endeavours for that purpoſe have hitherto proved unſucceſsful. Though conſiderable hath been attempted at different periods of time, to propagate chriſtianity among the heathen nations in North America, yet who can point out the ſeaſon, when miniſters and chriſtians in general, have uſed their joint and perſevering efforts for the promotion of this great and bleſſed deſign. Have not thoſe who profeſs to be chriſtians, generally treated this important buſineſs with too much indifferency? Have they not conſidered the Indian tribes as *irreclaimable*, and withheld more *than is meet*, in regard to their charitable deeds, for the ſupport of the miſſionaries among them?

Is not God as able of theſe ſavages and barbarians, to raiſe up *children unto Abraham*, as he was to convert thoſe in a ſimilar condition, in the days of the apoſtles? Has the promiſe, that he will give his Son *the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for his poſſeſſion*, ever been accompliſhed in its fulleſt extent? Then who can determine what may not yet be effected for their ſalvation, if a permanent foundation ſhould be laid, for the ſupport of faithful preachers among them? And ſhould all the churches in the American States, aid this glorious deſign, by their liberality, and by their prayers, God may yet do wonderful things for their periſhing ſouls.

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It is idle for the inhabitants of this flouriſhing country, to plead their inability to contribute a ſufficiency for this purpoſe, when ſo much is expended yearly for the ſupport of luxury and extravagance. It is truly an affecting thought, that the heathen are going to perdition by hundreds, and by thouſands, for the want of religious inſtruction, and yet multitudes are waſting large ſums daily, for the gratification of their fleſhly luſts. Nor will many perſons ſpare a cent, or lift a finger, to reſcue the benighted Pagans from darkneſs and ruin!

Such ought to take heed, leſt Chriſt, at the laſt day, ſhall ſentence them to depart, forever, from his preſence, *into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.* Becauſe, *when he was an hungred they gave him no meat:* Or, becauſe they refuſed to improve their worldly ſubſtance and Chriſtian privileges, for the promotion of his kingdom in the world, for which end, every bleſſing, ſpiritual and temporal, is granted to men.

I entreat you, O ye Chriſtians of every denomination, to take theſe things into ſerious conſideration, and think, while you are favoured with a fulneſs of the means of religious inſtruction, multitudes of your fellow-men are periſhing in ſottiſh ignorance. Conſider, alſo, that the *ſmall concerns* and the *little pains* you take for their ſalvation, is a powerful witneſs againſt you, that you have but a *ſmall estimation* of the privileges of the goſpel yourſelves. Such perſons as place a true value on their ſpiritual privileges, and have a proper eſtimate of their own ſouls, are always ſolicitous that their fellow creatures of every nation, kindred tongue and people, ſhould ſhare with them in the *great ſalvation.* It is *their hearts deſire and prayer to God*, that the goſpel of Chriſt *might have free courſe, run and be glorified.* If you, therefore, *have tasted* and ſeen *that the Lord is gracious*; if you have become heirs of the purchaſed ſalvation; if you have learnt the worth of your own ſouls—will not your bowels yearn over the poor heathen? And will you not exert yourſelves in every way, in which God in his word and providence directs, to promote, if poſſible, ſo benevolent and ſo glorious an object, as that of chriſtianizing and ſaving the heathen in this land?

AMATUS.

[*From the Christian Observer.*]

EXTRACTS

From the Common-Place Book of a Country Clergyman.

ON RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS.

IF *actions* only were required, without *dispositions*, the work of religion would be comparatively eaſy. Men may pronounce prayers, wear ſackcloth, keep faſts, give alms, &c.—Theſe external acts are in their power, and however irkſome in themſelves, many would be found to obſerve them as the price of their ſalvation. But the affections of the heart are out of our own power—we cannot at pleaſure change the objects of our love and averſion. We may *perform* religious exerciſes as a *taſk*, but we cannot make ourſelves *delight* in them as a *privilege*.—And yet nothing ſhort of this is true religion. Religion demands the affections. "Thou ſhalt *love* the Lord thy God." "My ſon, give me thine *heart*." Here then appears the neceſſity of divine grace, and the efficacy of its operation. It actually *produces* this change in the affections; and thus the work proves itſelf to be of God.

ON THE PRINCIPLE OF FRIENDSHIP.

THE principle of friendſhip is an indication of the dignity for which we were deſigned. We ſigh for union with other intelligent beings—ſeek a commerce of hearts—cannot realize our ideas and wiſhes here below—human friendſhips and unions deceive our expectations—to find what we want, we muſt aſcend to God himſelf.

ON THE LOVE OF VIRTUE.

INFIDELS *talk* much of the love of virtue. And why then do they not love the Bible?—Let any one read the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians—the preceptive parts of all the apoſtolic epiſtles—our Lord's ſermon on the mount, &c. Was ever ſo amiable and perfect a ſcheme of virtue preſented to the world? Surely a *virtuous* man would *wiſh* ſuch a religion to be true, though he could not think it ſo! He would ſee it to be of ſo much importance

to the peace and good order of ſociety, and to the welfare of all mankind individually, that he would rejoice if other men believed it, though he could not. He would do nothing to impede its reception, but rather would promote its influence to the utmoſt of his power. Nay more, he would practiſe it himſelf in ſpite of his unbelief. If a good rule be given us, that will promote our own happineſs and that of others, we ought to embrace and follow it, whoever be the author, and whatever its authority. Our own intereſt is obligation enough. Is it not plain, that every man who acts contrarily to theſe maxims, deceives himſelf, when he ſuppoſes that he *loves* virtue, while, in truth, he only *talks* of it?

On VITAL RELIGION.

THAT vital religion is a bleſſed reality, needs no other proof, than the exact coincidence of judgment, taſte, principles and habits, which prevails amongſt its profeſſors. Papiſts and Proteſtants, men in the wilds of America, and in the uncultivated countries of Europe, perſons who lived under the Jewiſh œconomy, and multitudes who live under the Chriſtian diſpenſation now, have all ſpoken, in ſpite of their ſeveral peculiarities, one common language of the heart about God and Chriſt, ſin and holineſs, time and eternity. Their religious hopes and fears, their joys and their ſorrows, have been the ſame. They have, in a word, perfectly underſtood one another's ſentiments, and entered into one another's feelings, (though myſterious and unintelligible to all the world beſide) on every ſubject eſſentially related to ſalvation. For eighteen centuries, Chriſtians, for example, have thought, and ſung, and prayed, with David, a Jewiſh king who reigned about three thouſand years ago. Scarcely have they had a ſentiment, a wiſh, or a feeling, that he has not anticipated. Whence this agreement? How happens it, that perſons ſo diſtant in time and place, in ſpeculative theories of religion, and in outward modes of worſhip, from each other, ſhould notwithſtanding ſo exactly harmonize? Can *imagination*, *enthuſiaſm*, *fancy*, explain it? Do but conſider how men's taſtes and ſentiments differ upon almoſt every ſubject, even where they live at the ſame time, are brought up in the ſame place, and trained to the ſame habits. And how then can imagination, the

moſt capricious and uncertain of all cauſes, account for a ſimilarity of effect, which no courſe of education, nor early prepoſſeſſions themſelves (ſtrong as theſe uſually are) are competent to produce?

Take a true Chriſtian from any pariſh in England, and let him meet one of the converted Indians of North America. Find them but a common language in which they may convey their meaning to one another—in an inſtant they will perfectly comprehend each other's views and feelings on every topic of religion—their hearts will be laid open, ſo to ſpeak, to each other's diſcernment—they will "love each other with a pure heart fervently," as brethren united in one ſentiment and in one intereſt, who accidentally meet together after a long and painful ſeparation. How will you account for this Indian ſo well underſtanding the Engliſhman, when perhaps there is not a man living in his own town or pariſh, to whom he is not an abſolute barbarian, when he attempts to ſpeak what he thinks and feels about a Saviour, and a life to come—about the beauty of holineſs, or the deformity of ſin? Surely there muſt be *reality*, where, without any previous communication, there is ſo much coincidence and agreement!

Had you lived at the day of Pentecoſt, and had heard the firſt diſciples ſpeaking to men of every nation under heaven in the language wherein they were born, you would have bowed to the reality of their pretenſions, and confeſſed a miracle. Behold, then, the counterpart of this miracle, equally aſtoniſhing and unaccountable upon any natural principles! All the difference is, that in *that* caſe, *one perſon* ſpake many languages—in *this*, *many perſons* of every kindred and nation, and tongue and people, whither the goſpel hath come, ſpeak *one* language.

On REASON and REVELATION.

THE greater part of thoſe who ſet up the claims of Reaſon againſt thoſe of Revelation, ſeem to forget that Reaſon is a faculty, not like *intuition*, that ſees the true natures, relations, or conſequences of things, at a *glance*; but which requires nice and accurate management, with aſſiduous labour and cul-

tivation, to make it a useful and safe guide to us, in avoiding error, and arriving at truth. It is not, like the senses of the body, perfect at once; but, like a diamond in its natural state, it is put rough into our hands to polish and improve by art and care. So much is this the case, that the improvement of our reason is taught by rule, and learned as a science.

Nothing more than the application of this remark is needful to confound our common infidels. Do they talk of their reason not suffering them to embrace Christianity? Let us ask them, whether they have made a right use of reason in determining the question. Have they practised all the rules which logicians lay down for the government of the understanding in its inquiries after truth? Have they cautiously guarded, in particular, against the influence of the passions in this business; and that more especially, because *here*, more than *any where*, it may be expected to prevail, unless great care be taken? Have they turned the subject on all sides, and considered it in all its parts, not satisfying themselves with a hasty, irregular and partial examination? These questions could not fail to silence them, if they had either sense or modesty. The general run of infidels are no logicians; and of those who are, how few, speaking honestly, will say, that they have as seriously, cautiously, and impartially applied the laws of sound reasoning to the examination of this subject, as they are conscious that they have done to other matters of science!

It certainly affords a presumption in favour of Christianity, that those men who have been most famous in the world for the cultivation of their intellectual powers, and are acknowledged on all sides to have carried the improvement of them to the greatest height, have been sincere believers, and warm defenders of this religion.

On SIN, as an OFFENCE against GOD.

HOW little perception is there, even in the Christian world, of the evil of *sin*, as it is a transgression of God's law! The authority of God is little contemplated. If a man's conscience reprove him for some vicious act, it is because of the irregularity and turpitude he sees in it, or on account of the injury which it may do to society; but that which is the grand aggravation of the crime—its being done against the

will and authority of God, and therefore an act of rebellion—is little thought of, and little affects the conſcience. That this is really the caſe, appears from hence, that many of thoſe people who paſs for good moral characters in the world, commonly regulate their conduct by conſiderations of moral fitneſs or unfitneſs, which are wholly independent of the divine command or prohibition. What merely ſtands on God's authority, they ſee little evil in, and have no great ſcruple about doing or not doing. Their own eaſe or humour, the leaſt poſſible preſent convenience or advantage, determines their conduct, and becomes a law to them, in preference to the bare motive of obeying or diſobeying God. Hence, to moſt perſons, Adam's ſin ſeems a trifle, becauſe committed only againſt a poſitive command; and the neglect of religious ordinances, or the breach of the Sabbath, for the ſame reaſon, gives little uneaſineſs to their conſciences. In the preſence of temptation, they are not reſtrained by Joſeph's conſideration, "How ſhall I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt *God*?" And in their repentance,—if they ever do repent of any thing they have done—they are far from the ſentiment and feeling of David, "Againſt thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight." David had ſinned againſt *man*, as well as againſt *God*; but the thought of his ſin as an act of daring impiety and rebellion againſt God, ſwallowed up, at the moment, every other conſideration. His crime was thus ſeen in its higheſt aggravation, and painted to his mind in colours ſo black and hideous, as to conceal the lighter ſhades of the ſad picture, and prevent, ſo to ſpeak, his perceiving them.

ON THE CONDUCT, AS AN INDEX TO THE HEART.

WHEN we exhort men to examine themſelves by their *conduct*, it is only as that is an index to the ſtate of the *heart*. The ſtate and diſpoſition of the *heart* determines the character, and being viſible to God, is that by which his judgment of us is formed. *We* can judge of *others* only by external appearances, but of *ourſelves*, our judgment ſhould be, as much as poſſible, guided by that of God. External actions are not always true indexes to the ſtate of the mind, becauſe good ac-

tions may proceed from bad principles. With other men's *principles*, indeed, we have comparatively little to do. While their *actions* are good, and ſociety ſuſtains no injury, from a charitable, though erroneous judgment of them, little inconvenience can reſult; but in our own caſe, a miſtake is fatal.

How great then is the folly of thoſe, who judge of themſelves only by their outward conduct! Preach againſt drunkenneſs, or other overt acts of ſin, and every one who, from whatever cauſe, can acquit himſelf of the practice condemned, preſently concludes in favour of his general character. In like manner, when ſpecific duties and virtues are inculcated, if, ſo far as concerns the outward *matter* and *form* of them, the man think himſelf blameleſs, the ſame flattering concluſion follows. Hence it is, that ſo many perſons diſlike cloſe appeals to the heart, and are ready to oppoſe ſuch as uſe them with—"He that *doeth* righteouſneſs is righteous"—"By their *fruits* ye ſhall know them," &c. "If," ſay they, "the fruit be good, is not the tree good? Can you know the quality of the tree by any other ſign?" No! and no better teſt need be required, provided you underſtand the terms you make uſe of. What do you mean by good fruit? Such as is fair and beautiful on the *outſide* only? Then you might chance to find your death in acting upon this principle; for there are many poiſonous trees in the world, which bear a beautiful and tempting fruit, pleaſant to the eyes, and grateful to the ſmell—perhaps alſo to the taſte; but it is not unfrequently found, that the ſame fruit which looks well, on being cut up, turns out to be corrupted and bad within. Juſt ſo it is with moral fruit. Examine it ſkilfully—ſee whether it be ſound *within*—employ the proper means for aſcertaining whether it be really as good as it appears to be; and if it abide the trial, we allow, that, *being* good, it demonſtrates the tree to be good alſo.

When our Lord ſays, "By their fruits ye ſhall know them," he cannot ſurely be ſuppoſed to intend the mere outward appearance, any more than a naturaliſt would, who was applying the ſame rule to the productions of the orchard or the garden. A fruit corrupt within, and beautiful without, is the emblem of a hypocrite.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT

Of the Revivals of Religion in the Congregation of Croſs-Creek, ſince 1794.

I TOOK the charge of this congregation in June 1794, and preached in Buffalo congregation alternately, one half of my time, until 1798. During this time nothing extraordinary appeared. There was in general a ſolemn attention, and ſilent weeping at ſome times. A conſiderable number were awakened to a ſenſe of their danger while in a natural ſtate. One hundred and twenty-three were admitted to communion, who have generally ſupported a profeſſion becoming the goſpel; and thoſe who are yet alive, are for the moſt part comfortable members of the church. Nearly an equal number of theſe were admitted in each congregation.

In the year 1799, the Lord poured out the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit on the congregation of Croſs-Creek. Many were awakened. But the work appeared to be cut ſhort. It did not continue viſible more than one year. Twenty only were admitted to communion at this time.

In the years 1800 and 1801, very few appeared to be religiouſly impreſſed. Only eight perſons were admitted to communion during theſe two years; all appeared to ſlumber and ſleep, both wiſe and fooliſh.

In the ſpring of the year 1802, the Lord again revived his work in this congregation, and carried it on in his uſual manner until the firſt Tueſday in October, at which time the bodily affections firſt appeared. In leſs than three months, one hundred, or perhaps more, had experienced ſuch feelings, as, at times, rendered them unable to ſtand or ſit up, without being ſupported. The effects of this work on the bodies of the ſubjects, were generally ſuch as produced debilitation, and were often preceded by lamentable cries for mercy, occaſioned by a deep ſenſe of ſin and miſery, awful views of their danger, and a feeling ſenſe of the hardneſs of their hearts, which frequently led them, when aſked what their feelings were, to ſay, "I had no feelings. My heart was ſo hard that I could not feel affected with my dreadful ſituation."

In the firſt ſtages of this work, the ſeſſion of this congregation, with myſelf, were ſomewhat alarmed. We had no doubt but that God was at work by his Spirit, convincing of

ſin and miſery; but we were afraid that the ſubjects of the work might run into extravagancies. The Spirit ſeemed like a mighty ruſhing wind, in ſome reſpects as on the day of Pentecoſt. Many were dreadfully alarmed with views of their own ſituation, and the condition of others around them. In a ſhort time a number of the ſubjects appeared to have obtained ſome relief to their diſtreſſed ſouls. We then converſed with ſuch, and finding ſome evidences of enthuſiaſm, we determined to uſe more than uſual caution. Particular care was taken to diſcriminate between the ſaving work of the Spirit of God and deluſion. But in a ſhort time our fears were, in a great meaſure, removed. The ſubjects of the extraordinary bodily affections became more deeply affected with a ſenſe of their wretchedneſs, their total depravity, the deceitfulneſs of their hearts, and the danger of building on ſome falſe foundation. Both their convictions and comforts came to them in a ſcriptural way. They generally have a deep ſenſe of their undone ſtate by nature, and their expoſedneſs to the wrath of God in conſequence of ſin. It appears as if the ſins of their childhood and youth all come to their view, but eſpecially the heaven-daring ſin of rejecting the Lord Jeſus, as he is offered to them in the goſpel. They have alſo a deep and feeling ſenſe of their inability to cloſe with Chriſt, or do any thing for their own relief.

Thoſe who have obtained relief, have ſcriptural views of the moral character of God, of the method of ſalvation through a Redeemer, of the ſufficiency of his atonement, and the way in which God can be juſt, and all his attributes remain unſpotted, in ſaving ſinners according to the new covenant plan. They appear to acquieſce in the method of ſalvation through Chriſt, making a full, free and hearty ſurrender of themſelves to God and his ſervice, embracing Chriſt as their Prophet, Prieſt and King, under a deep ſenſe of their need of him in all theſe offices, and of their entire unworthineſs of the leaſt favour at the hand of God.

The fruits and effects of this work, we believe, evidence it to be of God. Thoſe whoſe tongues were dumb in the things of God, have learned to ſpeak the language of Canaan. Thoſe who were formerly Sabbath breakers, ſcoffing at ſacred things, and guilty of other immoralities, have not only forſaken their former evil practices, but have become regular and ſober, di-

ligently attending the ordinances of God's houſe, and conſcientiouſly performing all the duties of religion. Thoſe who once depended upon their own attainments and good works for acceptance with God, have renounced all for the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Thoſe who formerly delighted in carnal company, merry jeſts, profane ſongs, fooliſh and vain converſation, now ſeek the company of thoſe who fear God, and delight in holy exerciſes and ſpiritual converſation. Thoſe who formerly attended upon the preaching of the goſpel either as idle ſpectators, or to cavil at and quarrel with it, now attend with a ſincere deſire to know their duty, to enjoy communion with God, and receive grace and ſtrength from him to enable them to live to his glory.

Very few of thoſe who were the ſubjects of bodily affections, expreſſed their ſenſe of divine things in the public aſſembly; and to the beſt of my recollection, never in the time of public worſhip, except by a time in a ſhort ſentence. But at other times, in converſation with aged chriſtians, they have in the moſt ſolemn, ſweet and affecting manner, ſpoken of the wiſdom, love and glory of God, ſhining in the plan of ſalvation through Chriſt. They have alſo lamented their ignorance and want of love to God, the evil propenſities of their hearts, and the total depravity of their natures. They have frequently expreſſed their deſire of holineſs and conformity to God, and their tender concern for his cauſe, and the ſalvation of ſinners. In ſhort, many evidence a ſweet, ſolemn, and humble diſpoſition, equal to any thing that we have witneſſed in young converts heretofore. But ſome of thoſe who were the ſubjects of bodily affections, as well as others who had been awakened, have turned back like the dog to his own vomit.

No ſtreſs has been laid upon bodily agitations or exerciſes, as an evidence of religion, or a criterion by which to judge of a ſaving work of the Spirit upon the ſoul. They have only been looked upon as a circumſtance which God had determined ſhould attend his work at this time.

Since this work began in the ſpring of 1802, one hundred perſons have been admitted to the Lord's table. About one half of this number have been ſubjects of bodily affections.—A number more at preſent appear to be under ſolemn ſoul exerciſe; and ſome, we hope, have experienced a ſaving change of nature, who have not yet made a public profeſſion of religion.

The greater part of thoſe who have been admitted, were young people, ſome middle aged, and but one who had arrived to old age. He was above ſeventy years old, had lived all his days under the means of grace, had been admitted to the Lord's table in early life, but judging himſelf unworthy in the ſight of God to enjoy this privilege, never applied again until the ſpring of 1804.

Thoſe admitted to communion ſince the ſpring of 1802, with perhaps one or two exeeptions, have, as far as is known to us, conducted themſelves in a good degree becoming the goſpel. And a number of them, with whom we have lately converſed, appear to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, and have become more acquainted with God, his word, and with themſelves. From the fruits which appear, ſome of which I have juſt mentioned, we muſt conclude that the Lord has wrought a gracious work amongſt us, of which we can have no doubt, which we cannot reject, while we acknowledge the Bible to be the ſtandard by which we form our ideas and regulate our ſentiments of God and divine things. May the Lord diſpoſe our hearts to gratitude for the various out-pourings of his Spirit which he has vouchſafed upon us as a congregation.

But we tremble at a view of the dreadful ſituation of numbers among us, who not only reject the Lord Jeſus, but are ſo heaven-daring as to deny the operations of God's Spirit, in the midſt of ſuch glaring evidence. May the God of heaven open their eyes, that they may ſee againſt whom and whoſe work they are cavilling.

THOMAS MARQUIS.

WE, the members of the ſeſſion of the congregation of Croſs-Creek, heartily join in atteſting the truth of the above ſtatement.

James Edgar,
Hugh Newell,
John Morriſon,
Robert M'Cready,
Henry Graham,
Joſeph Vance,
Thomas Marſhall,
Robert Lyſle,
William Rea.